

24

I am not satisfied as to
the nature of the disease
as laid down by authors -
nor of this portion of Huxton
so much confided in - &
up so now than before
I was reading
an excellent paper of
Mr. Huxgrave in the
Ed: Med. & Surg. Journal
of July 1827 - & who
times all these symptoms

An
Inaugural Dissertation
on
Mercurial Disease

Submitted
To

Dated March 10th 1828

The Examination of The Professors and Trustees of
the
University of Pennsylvania
For

The Degree of
Doctor of Medicine
By

Henry M. Siler
Carolina

In 3 (assuming that I have been employed
largely in Syphilis - ^{in the last 10 years} that
all the learned physicians were then - that
time, could have so entirely overlooked
what was due to the disease - or to the
Remedy? Is there a symptom now
not stated by old Authors - was before
the more general use of Iodine &
Syphilis was cured by the Quaternary
+ for a Patient to avoid this, rather needs the
bounds of modesty.

Does I ever, ^{or have I ever} ^{or have I ever} ^{or have I ever} ^{or have I ever}
have these symptoms - except when
Syphilis is contracted.

Mercurial Disease.

This appellation has been offered to that morbid effect resulting from the use of mercury in Syphilis when it produces a peculiar diseased action which supersedes or destroys the Venereal Taint, alters the symptoms of the Syphilitic disease into those of its own specific character, and produces new eruptions, nodes, ulcers &c.

This Disease is of comparatively modern origin, it was originally noticed by Benjamin Bell in his Treatise on Venereal and Lues Venerea, and since by Mr Hunter in his work on the same subject. Mr Mothion has given a more full description than any other writer on the subject.

The Venereal and Mercurial Disease bear a strong resemblance to one another, indeed, the greater number of cases treated as constitutional Syphilis are the effects of the abuse of Mercury.

This disease may be either constitutional or local, it commonly shows its progress, in some instances however it is very rapid and proves fatal in a short time.

In treating of this disease, I shall divide it into two stages (viz)

The Mild and the Confirmed. The mild stage is characterized by a loss of the power of the medicine on the disease, and the further progress of the venereal action interrupted, the ideas of being gradually this venereal, and opening the venereal action, they however still have the outward appearances of the venereal disease. It is of the greatest consequence to the patient that this stage of the disease should not be overlooked, for it is at this period that we are able most readily to destroy the disease.

These symptoms however are not usually attributed to the debilitated action of the mercury, but to its being exhibited in quantities too small to make any impression on the disease and it is therefore increased instead of being discontinued. Should this stage be neglected and the medicine continued, the disease will become so firmly radicated as to demand months, nay, even years to cure. Should no ideas be present and the mercurial movement action takes place, we will be enabled to detect the disease, by the pains in the bones & not yielding to the medicine, if it has been given in large quantities, we may rest assured the case is critical. Even if we are not able to decide positively as to the existence

7 are these, never the results of systematic action.

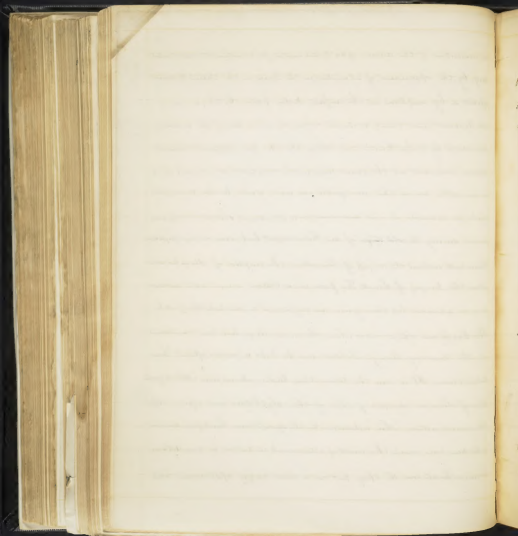
or necessities of the disease, after it has existed for sometime it will develop itself, by the appearance of ulceration on the Tongue, or the throat becoming affected, or by eruptions on the surface, Nodes, Pains &c. The progress of the Venereal Tumor being suspended originates, in a law of the economy elucidated by John Hunter and others, that no two different diseased actions can exist at the same time in the constitution or part of it, or in other words the most subtle one will yield to the more powerful, for example it is not uncommon for a Mercurial solution to be suspended during the cold stage of an Intermitting but resumes with the pyrexia. Hence with the progress of Gonorrhea the eruption of Mucules will retard the progress of Small Pox from circulation, several other instances may be adduced but these given are sufficient to establish the fact. The confirmed stage arises when the mild stage has been smothered out, the Mercury being exhibited and perhaps increased after it has taken place. It is now the Ulcerations, Bubbles, Nodes, and other symptoms of Lues are diverted of their of their Syphilitic and assume the Mercurial action. In addition to the symptoms last for some time new ones arise the result of Mercurial irritation as new Nodes around the old ones &c. they put on a more angry appearance and

not
not
not

not

not always

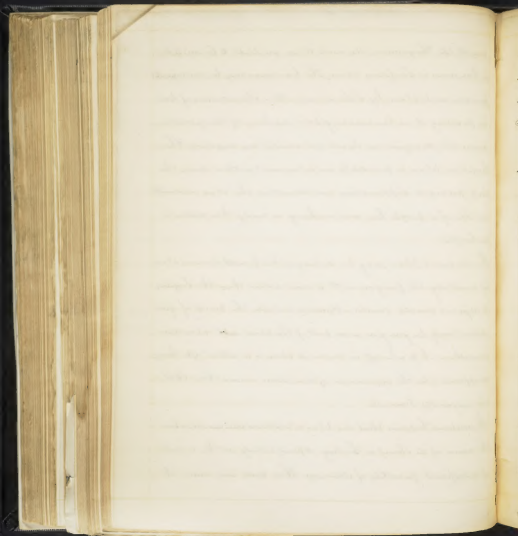
how far
you can
proceed



unlike the Phagedenic, Mercerial Ulcers are liable to be mistaken for Cancerous or Scrophulous Ulcers, The Cancerous may be distinguished from Mercerial Ulcers, by Scurrim and other characteristics of base - in preceding it, as haemorrhaging pain, discharge of bloody matter fungus, the margins are elevated and serrated very irregularly, The Scrophulous Ulcer is preceded by an enlargement without pain, this slowly proceeds to Suppuration and Ulceration, the edges are smooth and thin of a purple hue, and breaking, as curdy thin matter is discharged.

The Mercerial Ulcer may be distinguished from the Cancerous Ulcer by wanting the fungus, next is more active than the Scrophulous it edges are serrated, sometimes the margin is intact, the mass of granulation may be going on in one part of the ulcer and ulceration is another. A peculiarity in Mercerial Ulcers is to return after being disappared, also the appearance of new ulcers around them that are originally venereal.

It sometimes happens that an ulcer is treated as Mercerial, when the cause of its slough is healing depends entirely on the want of a sufficient quantity of mercury. These cases are rare, it



more frequently depends on an excess. It is not unusual for the symptoms of essential Disease to disappear entirely in summer, but so soon as winter approaches, they return.

The Causes are either predisposing or exciting. As one among the first, I dissyndery may be mentioned, weak people constitute one peculiarly propitious to the morbid mercurial action, inevitable habits also exist in producing this disease. The exciting causes are, exposure to cold mercurials, will produce the local disease, the internal use of Mercurials.

Having now given the History and Causes of this disease, I shall proceed to treat more particularly of the symptoms, and just up. Observe: When a chancre is opening the morbid mercurial action, the medicine does not cease, the same course pursues that it did previously, should it be continued till it spreads and become inflamed, and if the medicine is ever still farther sick deep and become very insupportable, should the chancre be only local there will be great probability of the system at large becoming affected, and we should have presented to us, all the symptoms heretofore enumerated as attending the constitutional



form of the disease becomes are sometimes cured by "healing" from
 a deficiency of illucency. We may generally ascertain this by
 the intense looking well, and the increase of the quantity of the men-
 -struum producing no bad effect. Catarrhes are not confined to
 any particular part of the Uterus, nor is their number limited
 as it occasionally happens that the gleets is attended with them
 accompanied at the same time with pain. The duration of the
 disease seldom when confined to the Catarrhes is only for a few
 days if the medicine is abandoned and mild topical cauteries are
 made to it. but if the contrary plan is pursued in a short time the
 disease ends to become constitutional, and of course requires a longer time to
 effect a cure.

Mucousal Bubo next demands our attention. It has been
 termed the Phagedenic Bubo. In the beginning of the mucousal Bubo the ingu-
 -nal glands are swollen attended with inflammation which can-
 not be reduced by the usual remedies, nor does it make much progress
 towards suppuration it however does take place, but there is little matter
 discharged the swelling however is not reduced, the bubo is now of a scabrous
 and unyielding nature. If the illucency is continued elevation will be very soon



taken place, the matter emitted is more ichorous and in considerable quantities, the pain is greatly increased, In some instances the ulceration is very extensive.

This Boils may arise from stimulating mercurial applications, or be the effect of the general disease, though local it sometimes extends to the system and the patient has the general disease, should then be allowed to continue, the unfortunate patient with less strength, his appetite will be gone, the white hums might increase, pain in the bones, weak pulse, and other symptoms of Mercurial Strain.

Ulcerated Throat. The tonsils, Tonsilary glands, and the Epiglottis and cartilages are all liable to take in the disease mercurial action. In some instances the back of the Throat also becomes affected. Ulcers of these parts are rarely connected with a local state of the disease and now and then are very formidable so much so as to lay bare the vertebrae and destroy the tracheal bones &c. Ulcers of the tonsils are liable to metastasis (viz) the one that is affected heals suddenly, and ulcerations appear on the other, this liability to metastasis has been considered, "about as pathognomonic sign of the mercurial ulceration in the throat" for my own part, I think it is entitled to



very little attention, and independently of other symptoms would afford but dubious evidence of the existence of the disease.

The Venereal Ulceration in the Throat and the Mercurial have a great resemblance, so as to render it, in every case, matter to distinguish them one from the other, by enquiring if the Ulcer existed previous to the use of the Mercury, and also (the quantity) given may have some weight in influencing our decision.

The Periosteum, Bones, and Cartilages, are also subject to the Mercurial Disease, when affected, heat, pain and swelling are present. The same resemblance in the symptoms of the Venereal and Mercurial diseases. Therefore the use of is also present, and we should be governed by the same rules that are laid down when speaking of Ulcerated Throat, when the Mercurial Disease affects the bones, the pain is more acute during the night when the patient is in bed, the bones of the nose are diseased by the dose of Mercury attacking the same parts that the Syphilitic virus does. The Periosteum is the most common seat of the disease, and we know pain, swelling, and inflammation, The Cartilages are sometimes affected and



is known by tumors, pains, &c. being present when the joint
are the seat of the disease, which is frequently the case when
the disease is constitutional, the symptoms, without atten-
ding to the previous history of the case, would induce us
to think it a case of Rheumatism,

The eruption of a purulent inflammation being abscessum
ally attends the disease.

Treatment. In speaking of the remedies adapted adapt-
ed to this disease, I shall follow the same arrangement
that I did in treating of the history, symptoms, &c. and first
of the Constitutional form of the disease. When the patient
is plethoric the pulse full and quick, and the veins purified
we should draw off some blood, if the bowels are costive
they should be opened by some mild cathartic, (hawney leaf)
these means reduced the system sufficiently, we may now
resort to the Compound Decoction of Cassia fistula, made as follows

R. Gummi Benzoinella ℥ij

R. Gummi Benicac. ℥ij

Allegreum 3j

q. s. ad 12



boil down slowly to one gallon, strain and add Sugar enough to make it pleasant, This dose is to be given daily as the urgency of the case requires, and at the same time exhibit Pills (which I have seen of the most decided benefit) made in the following manner

R. Sulph. Aur. Antim. grs 40

Gum Guaiac " 40

Sop. Hesperis 2.℥

Extract. Gentian Dig. Al. S. Soap Sivevis ind.

Pills 40. of which the dose is 3 per day. Should the patient be in the opposite state (viz) constipated & thus will not be so much ready for purgative evacuations. we may commence directly with the Diacetic and Pills, the diet should be nourishing and generous, I had an opportunity, not long since of seeing a negro with such ones of the disease in a negro woman of some years and in one which had been treated by repeated courses of Mercury, the case being considered to be of a syphilitic character, there were very large and misshapen ulcers on various parts of the body, more particularly on the inside of the inside of the thighs, a very extensive one on the back of the shoulder, besides smaller ones



discharging) & their chronic matter, the eyes were also liberated
 the appetite improved, pulses small and quick, and considerable emaciation
 she had undergone & in 5 courses of bleeding. She was treated as
 I have indicated by the pills and decoctions, and in the course of a
 few months was cured, and has since been delivered of a few 'healthy'
 child. The treatment of the disease when no uterus or breast does
 not differ from the treatment above, in details.

The local disease is usually confined to one breast, as a preliminary
 measure it is absolutely necessary the bleeding be discontinued, without
 this precaution all our remedies will be unavailing either in this or the
 constitutional form of the disease. The disease frequently disappears with
 out any medicine by discontinuing its use. If the breast is profusely irritable
 and attended with inflammation of the surrounding parts, leeches
 will be necessary, we may use formulations of Hahnemann, it relieves
 pain, and improves its circulation. Antiseptic of lead in solution will
 very much assist in keeping them down.

The disease when irritable and very little inflammation attending
 which is frequently the case when the disease is of long standing) requires
 friction of bread and milk with a small quantity of camellia oil.



of the best applications, having allayed the irritation we may rub the parts with a weak solution of Sulphate of Zinc or Lemon Juice. In the treatment of the ulcerated Throat the mildest applications will answer best, as a bread and milk poultice, if it is painful formations with Hæmlock will be beneficial. As soon as irritation is reduced some mild dressing should be used, if pain is excited they must be discontinued.

The Ulcerated Throat is to be treated by gargles of Sulphate of Zinc &c. Mr. Mothrus relates a very interesting case of a woman, who had laboured under the disease in the throat for a considerable length of time, she was greatly reduced and the Tonsils, under the destroyed, by the use of the decoction of Sassafras and Tonic pills with a seton on the back of the neck, the ulcers gradually healed, and the woman rapidly recovered.

When the Cartilages, Bones, or Tendons are affected the treatment will be the same as that for the Constitutional disease inasmuch as the two are always connected.

By pursuing the plan of treatment indicated above we will

lie, ordinarily, successful, but in some instances the con-
tributor disceus may become, by repentant course of living
so deeply averted as to baffle all our skills, and I must have
- ever not be disheartened, nor remain a quiet specta-
- tor of the ravages the disceus is committing on our
patient, but endeavor to avert, although we are un-
- able to effect a cure.

Handwritten text in a cursive script, likely from a 17th or 18th-century manuscript. The text is written in dark ink on aged, slightly discolored paper. The handwriting is fluid and characteristic of the period.

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